

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 BONN 15029

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR GW

SUBJECT: CDU SECRETARY-GENERAL BIEDENKOPF'S ASSESSMENT  
OF THE OPPOSITION'S CHANCES IN THE BUNDESTAG  
ELECTION

REFS: (A) BONN 14675 (NOTAL); (B) BONN 12382 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY: CDU SECRETARY-GENERAL BIEDENKOPF MET  
SEPTEMBER 2 WITH OFFICERS WHO FOLLOW WEST GERMAN DOMESTIC  
POLITICS AT THE NATO AND EC EMBASSIES IN BONN. FOR  
NEARLY TWO HOURS BIEDENKOPF PROVIDED HIS ANALYSIS OF THE  
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FRG INTERNAL SCENE. HE PREDICTED THE ELECTION OUTCOME

WILL BE CLOSE, WITH NEITHER OPPONENT OBTAINING A MAJORITY OF MORE THAN 8-10 SEATS IN THE BUNDESTAG, BUT THAT UNLESS SOMETHING UNFORESEEN HAPPENED IN THE NEXT FOUR WEEKS THE CDU/CSU WOULD EMERGE THE VICTOR, ALBEIT WITH A SMALL MAJORITY. BIEDENKOPF ARGUED THAT THE UNION PARTIES OVER THE LONG RUN ARE MORE ATTRACTIVE TO THE MAJORITY OF THE FRG VOTERS, AND THAT THERE IS A GROWING BELIEF AMONG FRG VOTERS THAT IT IS TIME FOR A CHANGE. SHOULD THE CDU/CSU MISS AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY BY ONLY A FEW SEATS, HE MAINTAINED, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR THE FDP TO REJECT POPULAR PRESSURE FOR A COALITION WITH THE CDU/CSU.

ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL BIEDENKOPF SAID THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC APPROACH TO "OSTPOLITIK" DIFFERS FROM THAT OF THE SPD-FDP COALITION IN THAT TREATIES WITH THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES SHOULD BE INTENDED TO SOLVE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS. THE SPD/FDP "OSTPOLITIK" WAS BASED ON THE FAULTY PREMISE THAT THE TREATIES WERE A PROCESS WHICH WOULD BRING ABOUT CHANGES WITHIN THE COMMUNIST WORLD. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THE CDU'S COMMITMENT TO EUROPEAN INTEGRATION. END SUMMARY.

1. CDU SECRETARY-GENERAL KURT BIEDENKOPF MET ON SEPTEMBER 2 WITH A GROUP OF BONN EMBASSY OFFICERS FROM THE NATO AND EC COUNTRIES. THIS WAS SIMILAR TO THE MEETING BETWEEN EMBASSY OFFICERS AND SPD DEPUTY CHAIRMAN KOSCHNICK REPORTED IN REFTEL (B). IN A FORTY-MINUTE PRESENTATION, FOLLOWED BY A DISCUSSION PERIOD WHICH LASTED OVER AN HOUR, BIEDENKOPF GAVE THE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE FRG:

THE ELECTION RESULT WILL BE CLOSE. LATEST POLLS INDICATE BOTH SIDES ARE NECK-AND-NECK. THE 12-15 PERCENT STILL UNDECIDED WILL MAKE UP THEIR MINDS DURING THE FINAL THREE WEEKS OF THE CAMPAIGN. THESE UNDECIDEDS ARE GENERALLY NOT POLITICALLY INTERESTED, BUT THEY DO TEND TO BE INFLUENCED BY TRENDS AND THEIR POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT. FOR MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP, THE POLL QUESTION "WHO DO YOU THINK WILL WIN THE ELECTION?" IS OFTEN A BETTER INDICATOR OF HOW THEY WILL REACT THAN CONFIDENTIAL

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"WHO WILL YOU VOTE FOR NEXT SUNDAY?" EARLY IN THE CAMPAIGN 47 PERCENT REVEALED THEY FELT THE OPPOSITION WOULD WIN, WHILE 36 PERCENT FAVORED THE SPD/FDP. POLLS TAKEN DURING THE SUMMER REVEAL THAT THIS ELEVEN PERCENT LEAD HAS BEEN REDUCED, BUT THE OUTLOOK FOR THE CDU/CSU IS STILL GOOD.

IN 1976 THERE IS NO CENTRAL ISSUE SUCH AS OSTPOLITIK

IN 1972. PERSONALITIES WILL PLAY A KEY ROLE, ALTHOUGH THE VOTERS DO NOT APPEAR TO GIVE MUCH WEIGHT TO THE PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES ONE FINDS IN CONTRASTING THE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TWO PRINCIPAL CANDIDATES, KOHL AND SCHMIDT. YET, THE VOTERS APPEAR READY FOR A CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP. THE VOTING PUBLIC BELIEVES A CHANGE SHOULD OCCUR EVERY EIGHT YEARS. AT THE SAME TIME, A GENERAL FEELING OF DISSATISFACTION AND INSECURITY ABOUT THE FUTURE IS RESULTING IN DECLINING CONFIDENCE IN SCHMIDT AND HIS PARTY. THIS VAGUE FEELING OF UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE IS PARTIALLY DUE TO THE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 BONN 15029

FACT THAT MANY WEST GERMANS TODAY ARE MATERIALLY WELL-OFF AND WANT TO HOLD ON TO WHAT THEY HAVE. THE RECENT RECESSION TOO HAS MADE THEM FEAR FOR THEIR JOBS. A MAJORITY IN THE ELECTORATE FEELS THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ARE MORE COMPETENT TO CARRY THEM SAFELY INTO THE FUTURE.

YOUTH, TOO, ARE DISAPPOINTED WITH THE GOVERNMENT. IN THE POSTWAR ERA, THERE WAS FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG GERMANS BECAUSE SO MANY OF THE OLDER GENERATION  
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HAD BEEN KILLED DURING THE WAR. A STAGNANT ECONOMY AND A NEW POPULATION PATTERN HAVE, HOWEVER, SEVERELY RESTRICTED YOUTH OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT. AS AN EXAMPLE, UP UNTIL 1974 THERE WERE SOME 3,000 NEW UNIVERSITY TEACHING POSITIONS AVAILABLE ANNUALLY. THIS YEAR THERE WILL BE ONLY 300 OPENINGS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO BEEN UNABLE TO MEET MANY OF THE OTHER EXPECTATIONS THAT YOUTH AWAITED FROM THEIR HERO WILLY BRANDT.

WEST GERMANS WANT TO BE CHALLENGED AGAIN AS THEY WERE IN THE POSTWAR PERIOD. HELMUT KOHL IS THUS MEETING POSITIVE RESPONSE WHEN HE URGES THE VOTERS TO HEED PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S CALL "ASK NOT WHAT THE COUNTRY CAN DO FOR YOU...." THE VOTERS ARE LIKEWISE CONCERNED ABOUT CONFRONTATIONS ARISING FROM COMMUNIST ACTIVITY IN ANGOLA AND IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA. HERE TOO KOHL AND THE VIEWS OF THE CDU/CSU ARE ATTRACTING SUPPORT.

NO ONE CAN PREDICT WHAT DRAMATIC INCIDENTS WILL OCCUR DURING THE NEXT FOUR WEEKS TO AFFECT THE ELECTION. A TERRORIST ACTION COULD TAKE PLACE WHICH, BASED ON HOW THE GOVERNMENT REACTED, COULD GAIN OR LOSE VOTES. THE POPULAR SUPPORT FOR CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S HANDLING OF THE STOCKHOLM INCIDENT HELPED THE SPD IN THE NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA ELECTION LAST YEAR. SOME FACTORS THAT COULD SWING VOTES HOWEVER INCLUDE:

-- THE SWEDISH ELECTION WHERE A SOCIALIST LOSS COULD HURT THE SPD, ALTHOUGH IT PROBABLY WOULD NOT HAVE A GREAT INFLUENCE. WORSE FOR THE SPD WOULD BE A "VOLKSFRONT" GOVERNMENT IN SWEDEN.

-- THE LOCKHEED SCANDAL, WHICH WILL ONLY PLAY A MINOR ROLE, BECAUSE IT IS WIDELY KNOWN THERE IS NO DEFINITE CONNECTION WITH CSU LEADERS. INFORMANT ERNEST

HAUSER'S CHARGES AGAINST THE CSU HAVE BEEN REFUTED.

-- KOHL'S CHALLENGE TO THE CHANCELLOR THAT THEY MEET  
IN A ONE-AND-ONE DEBATE. THIS DUEL IS MEETING WITH  
POPULAR APPROVAL. EIGHTY TO NINETY PERCENT OF THE  
ELECTORATE WOULD WATCH. THE CHANCELLOR'S RETORT  
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"NOT WITHOUT GENSCHER" REVEALS THE PAINFUL POSITION  
IN WHICH THE FDP LEADER FINDS HIMSELF IN THIS DISPUTE...,  
INSECURE AND DEPENDENT UPON SCHMIDT.

NONETHELESS, SHOULD NOTHING SERIOUS HAPPEN, THE  
CDU/CSU WILL WIN WITH A SMALL MAJORITY.

THE OPPOSITION'S FORTUNES IN THE REMAINDER OF THE  
COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG AND BAVARIA,  
WILL ALSO HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN DETERMINING  
HOW MUCH OF A CDU VOTE IS NEEDED IN NORTH RHINE-  
WESTPHALIA. IF THE CDU/CSU DOES AS WELL AS IT DID IN THE  
RECENT LANDTAG REGIONAL ELECTIONS, THE UNION WILL WIN THE  
NATIONAL ELECTION. LOOKING AT NRW ALONE, IF A SUFFICIENT  
NUMBER (SIX PERCENT) OF SPD SUPPORTERS CAN BE CONVINCED  
NOT TO VOTE AND THE CDU RECEIVES THE SAME TOTAL AS IN  
1975, THEN THE ELECTION THERE TOO IS WON. THE CDU IS  
MEETING WITH A POSITIVE RESPONSE IN NRW AS MANY ARE  
UNHAPPY WITH THE ENTRENCHED SPOILS SYSTEM IN THE SPD  
STRONGHOLDS WHICH EVEN CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT HAS CRITICIZED,  
AS WELL AS THE MISUSE OF POWER OF THE LABOR UNIONS IN THE  
RUHR AREA, WHICH IS THE SUBJECT TOO OF MUCH COMPLAINT.  
THE FOURTH PARTY (AVP) WILL BE NO THREAT IN NRW, OR IN  
THE FRG AS A WHOLE, SINCE IT HAS NOT BEEN OFFICIALLY  
SANCTIONED IN SEVERAL OF THE STATES AND CAN BOAST NO  
PROMINENT PERSONALITIES. AT BEST IT CAN ONLY HOPE FOR A  
FEW VOTES.

THE CDU SLOGAN "FREIHEIT STATT SOZIALISMUS" HAS MET  
WITH POSITIVE RESONANCE. INSTEAD OF IGNORING IT, SOCIAL  
DEMOCRATS BECAME DEFENSIVE. THIS THEME ACTUALLY DERIVES  
FROM A SPEECH BIEDENKOPF DELIVERED BEFORE THE CATHOLIC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 BONN 15029

ACADEMY IN MUNICH IN 1973, IN WHICH HE ADVOCATED A  
"FREIHEITLICHE ALTERNATIVE ZUM SOZIALISMUS." THE  
SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, HOWEVER, DUCKED THE CHALLENGE AT  
THAT TIME, WHICH WAS THE HIGH POINT OF LEFT-WING  
INFLUENCE IN THE SPD. SUCH SPD LEADERS AS BRUNO  
FRIEDRICH WARNED THEN THAT A RENEWED INTERNAL DEBATE  
ABOUT THE SPD'S GODESBERG PROGRAM COULD SPLIT THE  
PARTY. THE FOLLOWING APRIL BRANDT ATTEMPTED UNSUCCESS-  
FULLY TO PUSH A 10-POINT PROGRAM TO UNITE OPPOSING  
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC VIEWS. HE FAILED, AND IT WAS THIS  
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INABILITY TO KEEP THE PARTY TOGETHER THAT FORCED HIM  
TO RESIGN AS CHANCELLOR RATHER THAN THE GUILLAUME SPY

AFFAIR. BRANDT TRIED TO SIDESTEP THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PRESSURE WITH A "SECURITY RISK" ACCUSATION AGAINST THE UNION PARITES IN HIS MANNHEIM CONVENTION SPEECH LAST FALL. THIS FAILED, AS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL PEOPLE REACTED NEGATIVELY TO THE SPD-LEFT, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE OF THEIR CONFUSED EDUCATION POLICIES. WHEN THEN THE CDU AND CSU FLOATED THEIR SLOGANS CONCERNING FREEDOM THIS YEAR, THE SPD LEADERSHIP WAS FINALLY FORCED TO TAKE HEED.

THE FDP WILL ONLY LEAVE ITS COALITION WITH THE SPD WHEN THE PARTY FEELS ITS EXISTENCE IS THREATENED. THE FDP LEADERSHIP FEARS A KOHL-SCHMIDT DEBATE, AS GENSCHER WOULD BE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD. SHOULD THE CDU/CSU MISS AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY BY TWO SEATS, THE "LAME DUCK" PERIOD BETWEEN OCTOBER 3 AND DECEMBER 14 WILL CONCENTRATE ON THE SINGLE QUESTION "WHAT IS THE FDP GOING TO DO?" IT IS LIKELY THAT THE FDP WILL LOSE ITS NERVE AND CHOOSE TO SUPPORT KOHL, WHO WILL CLAIM THAT THE UNION PARTIES HAVE RECEIVED A MANDATE TO GOVERN, POINTING TO THE CONTROL THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ALREADY HAVE OF THE BUNDES RAT. GENSCHER WILL ALSO REALIZE IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR A SOCIAL/LIBERAL COALITION TO MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE WITH ONLY A TWO-SEAT MAJORITY.

THE SPD/FDP ARE MISTAKEN IN THEIR VIEW THAT OSTPOLITIK WILL LEAD TO A CHANGE IN COMMUNIST WORLD AIMS. IT IS BASED ON THE FALSE ASSUMPTION ONE CAN CHANGE THE COMMUNIST SYSTEM BY INCREASING CONTACT. THE SOVIET UNION WILL ONLY CHANGE IF IT IS FORCED TO ADJUST ITS SYSTEM TO THE DEMANDS OF THE MODERN TECHNOLOGICAL STATE. THE SOVIET LEADERS CANNOT EVEN SOLVE THEIR OWN CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY THEIR AGRICULTURAL ONES. THEIR IMPORTS OF AMERICAN GRAIN PROVE THIS. THE FREE WORLD ECONOMIC SYSTEM IS BETTER EQUIPPED TO HANDLE THE PROBLEMS OF THE POST-INDUSTRIAL STATE. THE CDU/CSU RECOGNIZES THIS. ITS OSTPOLITIK WOULD BE MORE REALISTIC. ITS AIM WOULD BE TO MAKE

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FURTHER TREATIES WITH THE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES ONLY IN ORDER TO SOLVE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS AS THEY ARISE. THE CDU/CSU WOULD INSIST THAT THE COMMUNISTS CARRY OUT THOSE POINTS AGREED UPON. THE FRG MUST NOT BE AFRAID TO DEMAND ADHERENCE TO AGREEMENTS, AS THE JUNGE UNION DID IN ITS STERNFAHRT TO WEST BERLIN WHICH GDR BORDER AUTHORITIES UNJUSTLY HINDERED.

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TRADE CAN BE A POLITICAL INSTRUMENT. COMMUNIST COUNTRIES SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN FIRST PREFERENCE WHEN IT CAME TO ARRANGING STATE-SUPPORTED TRADE PACTS, AS IS NOW THE CASE IN THE FRG. COUNTRIES ON NATO'S SOUTHERN FLANK SHOULD BE GIVEN PRIORITY. (TURKEY, AS INDUSTRIAL EUROPE'S BRIDGE TO IRAN, IS VERY IMPORTANT IN THIS CONTEXT. IT WOULD ALSO BE FAR BETTER TO INCREASE WEST GERMAN INVESTMENT THERE THAN FOR THE FRG TO TAKE ON MORE TURKISH "GASTARBEITER.") IF THE COMMUNIST



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COUNTRIES WANT TO TRADE WITH THE WEST, THIS SHOULD BE  
THROUGH FREE EXCHANGE WHERE THERE ARE MUTUAL MARKETS,  
OR ELSE THROUGH PAYMENT IN CASH.

AS REGARDS EUROPEAN UNITY, THE CDU/CSU IS UNHAPPY  
WITH THE PRESENT STATE OF PLAY. SCHMIDT IS WRONG IN  
PREFERRING SUMMIT SOLUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY  
INSTITUTIONS. THE COMMISSION SHOULD BE ACCORDED MORE  
SUPPORT SO IT CAN ATTRACT BETTER PEOPLE. LIKEWISE,  
GOOD CANDIDATES MUST BE FOUND FOR THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, AS THAT IS A BODY THAT WILL HAVE TO FIGHT  
TO INCREASE ITS SHARE OF LEGISLATIVE INFLUENCE IN THE  
WEST EUROPEAN SCENE.  
HILLENBRAND

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